

CHAPTER VIII: SIGNS

8.1 PURPOSE. This Chapter governs the establishment of on and off-premise signs to provide for effective communication while protecting property values and public safety.

8.2 ON-PREMISE SIGN STANDARDS.

8.2.1 Generally. Other than lawful nonconforming signs, no signs shall be permitted in any district except in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

8.2.2 Authorized Signs - Agricultural and Residential Districts. Exhibit 8.2.1 lists sign types and standards authorized in agricultural and residential districts.

Exhibit 8.2.1: Authorized Signs in Agricultural and Residential Districts.

Sign	Max. Area (Sq. Ft.)	Number	Zoning District			
			A-1	AR-1	R-1	R-2
Identification Signs (e.g., address or building name)	2	1	✓	✓	✓	✓
Church or public bulletin boards	32	1	✓	✓	✓	✓
Farm home occupations signs	12	1	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agricultural service business signs	32	1	✓	✓	✓	✓
Temporary signs advertising the sale or lease of the premises	32*	2	✓	✓	✓	✓
* Sign area not to exceed 2 square feet per 10 linear feet of street frontage.						

8.2.3 Authorized Signs - Commercial and Industrial Districts. Exhibit 8.2.2 lists sign types and standards authorized in commercial and industrial districts.

Exhibit 8.2.2: Authorized Signs in Commercial and Industrial Districts.

Sign	Max. Area (Sq. Ft.)	Max. Height	Zoning District			
			C-1	C-2	M-1	M-2
Temporary signs advertising the sale or lease of the premises	24		✓	✓	✓	✓
Trade, business or industry identification signs - (signs must be located on site and pertain to goods and services sold on premises.)	100	25 ft	✓	✓	✓	✓



Sign	Max. Area (Sq. Ft.)	Max. Height	Zoning District			
			C-1	C-2	M-1	M-2
Wall mounted signs - not to exceed 20% of building face.	200		✓	✓	✓	✓
Signs painted on walls - not to exceed 20% of building face.	200		✓	✓	✓	✓
Free standing signs	300*	35 ft			✓	✓
Total combined area of all signs.	the lesser of 200 sq.ft. or 2 sq.ft. per lineal foot of lot frontage		✓	✓	✓	✓

~>(*Amended 11/22/2000-Ord 2000-05)

8.2.4 Exempt Signs. Except as noted below, the following signs are excluded from regulation under this chapter. Exemption from the sign regulations does not exempt property owners from duties and responsibilities established within deed restrictions or covenants.

- A. Signs not exceeding two (2) square feet in area that are customarily associated with residential use, and are not of a commercial nature, such as signs identifying names or numbers or signs on mailboxes;
- B. Signs erected by, or on behalf of, or pursuant to the authorization of a governmental body, including legal notices, identification and informational signs and traffic, directional or regulatory signs;
- C. Official signs of a non-commercial nature erected by public utility companies;
- D. Flags, pennants or insignia of any governmental body when not displayed in connection with a commercial promotion or as an advertising device.
- E. Integral decorative or architectural features of buildings or works of art, so long as such features or works do not contain letters, trademarks, moving parts or lights;
- F. Signs on or adjacent to doors at the rear of commercial buildings displaying only the names and addresses of the occupant. Such signs shall not exceed four (4) square feet.



Where multiple tenants share the same rear door, the sign may display the names and addresses of each tenant;

- G. Signs painted on or otherwise permanently attached to currently licensed and operable motor vehicles, which vehicles are not stored in open areas or primarily used as signs;
- H. Signs located within buildings, provided such signs are not visible from any street, sidewalk, trail, beach or bike path adjacent to said building; and
- I. Signs expressing constitutionally protected speech.
- J. Signs directing and guiding traffic and parking on public or private property but bearing no advertising matter.
- K. Warning signs, no trespassing, no hunting and similar signs not to exceed two (2) square feet in area located on the premises.
- L. Temporary signs relating to construction not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet in area.
- M. Campaign signs on private property shall be regulated pursuant to state law.

8.2.5 Prohibited Signs.

- A. Signs with flashing, moving or glaring parts.
- B. Non-affixed signs (*e.g.*, signs that are not permanently affixed to a building, structure or the ground;
- C. Non-exempt signs in street rights-of-way;
- D. Signs containing obscene messages;
- E. Signs which resemble traffic control signs or devices; and
- F. Portable signs, except as permitted in Section 8.2.6.



8.2.6 Design Standards for Signs.

- A. No sign may be located such that it substantially interferes with the sight triangle necessary for motorists to proceed safely through intersections or to enter onto or exit from public or private streets.
- B. No sign shall be erected within 10 feet of a side property line. No front yard setback shall be required for on-premise signs. No sign may be erected such that by its location, color, size, shape, nature or message it would tend to obstruct the view of, or be confused with, traffic signals or other signs erected by governmental agencies.
- C. Freestanding signs shall be securely fastened to the ground or to some other substantial supportive structure so that there is minimal risk that either the sign or the supportive structure may be moved by the wind or other forces of nature and cause injury to persons or property.
- D. All signs shall be of sound structural quality, be maintained in good repair and have a clean and neat appearance. Land adjacent to such signs shall be kept free from debris, weeds and trash. If a sign is not being maintained and the Administrator determines it to be a public hazard or nuisance, such sign shall be ordered repaired or removed.
- E. Temporary signs for special events may be approved provided the signs do not have moving parts, blinking or flashing lights, glaring lights, neon or extensive use of bright, offensive colors, and further provided that any temporary sign shall be permitted for a maximum of fifteen (15) days.
- F. Illumination of signs and billboards shall be indirect, non-intermittent lighting.

8.3 OFF-PREMISE SIGN STANDARDS. No off-premise sign shall be erected or structurally modified prior to issuance of a permit by the Administrator.

8.3.1 Generally.

- A. No off-premise sign shall be permitted except when permitted as a temporary off-premise sign or when otherwise authorized by these regulations or Iowa State Code along designated primary highways.
- B. These regulations establish restrictions and limitations on the use of off-premise advertising signs and billboards. An off-premise advertising sign shall not be allowed except as provided in this chapter.



- C. Off-premise signs or billboards shall be limited to the M-1 and M-2 districts.
- D. All signs and billboards are subject to the setback regulations established for the zoning district in which they are located.
- E. Signs and billboards shall be limited to a maximum height of thirty feet (30') and a maximum length of sixty feet (60'). Height shall be calculated as the vertical distance from the base of the sign, or from the adjacent roadway grade, whichever is higher, to the highest point of the sign or billboard.
- F. No sign or billboard shall be located in such a manner as to obstruct or otherwise physically interfere with the effectiveness of an official traffic sign, signal, or device, or obstruct or physically interfere with a motor vehicle operator's view of approaching, merging, or intersecting traffic.
- G. Any lighting arrangements, facilities, or fixtures, which are intended to illuminate any sign or billboard, shall be hooded, shielded, or diffused in such a manner as to prevent any beams or rays of light from being directed into any portion of pavement of a highway.
- H. No sign or billboard shall be permitted with moving, flashing, or pulsating lighting arrangements, or which give the visual illusion of such arrangements; nor any revolving or rotating signs or billboards or signs or billboards with other moving mechanical parts of promotional advertising devices which rely upon wind currents to create movement or the illusion of movement.
- I. Every sign or billboard and its supporting structure shall be maintained in good repair. All structural members and all advertising copy shall be kept painted and clean so as to prevent deterioration, oxidation, paint fading, paint peeling or other unsightly conditions. Owners that are found to be improperly maintaining signs or billboards shall be given formal notice to correct the condition with thirty (30) days.
- J. In the event the Administrator revokes a permit and orders removal of a sign or billboard, any such removal shall be totally at the expense of the sign owner. Upon failure of the sign owner to remove a sign, when so ordered by the Administrator, the sign shall be removed by the County and disposed of or destroyed as deemed appropriate. The County assumes no liability for removed material. The sign owner will be billed, by the County, for reasonable cost of any sign removal.
- K. Private signs shall not be placed or otherwise erected on the street or highway right-of-way.



- L. No billboard shall be located within 500 feet of a residence, school park, cemetery or public or semi-public building.
- M. No billboard shall be located within 500 ft of another billboard or advertising sign facing the same direction.

8.3.2 Exempt Off-Premise Sign. Placement of temporary, unilluminated off-premise signs is permitted, without the granting of a permit, in any zoning district provided it meets the following conditions.

- A. The intent is to direct attention to orchards, berry farms, auctions, garage sales, community events or similar activities;
- B. Sign placement occurs no more than sixty (60) days during a calendar year;
- C. Sign placement occurs on private property with permission from the property owner;
- D. The gross area of a sign shall be no larger than twenty (20) square feet; and,
- E. No more than two (2) temporary signs shall be permitted for any use.